SUMMARY DATA

Navy Region Northwest Public Affairs Office
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SUMMARY DATA FOR USS SHOUP REPORT **Feb. 09, 2004**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Note: The following information is part of the Navy inquiry of USS Shoup acoustic data and was conducted independent of the NOAA necropsy study. The final Navy report will include the results provided from the NOAA report.

- On May 5, 2003, USS Shoup operated its sonar in a manner consistent with established guidelines and procedures.
- Based on all available evidence, there is no indication Shoup's sonar use on May 5, 2003 killed or injured any marine mammals or was responsible for any subsequent harbor porpoise strandings.
- The NOAA report did not reveal any signs of acoustic trauma in the porpoises examined. While the possibility of acoustic trauma as a contributory factor was not ruled out, it is noted that the necropsies were completed independent of consideration of when and where the porpoises were discovered. This information places all of the strandings but one on different dates and locations from USS Shoup's operations.

Note: (page 52 of report) "The middle ears of virtually all the examined heads appeared normal with discrete middle ear spaces, intact ossicles, round and oval windows, and well defined normal distributed corpus cavernosum."

- The only porpoises that had a definitive cause of death died of either blunt trauma or illness.

Note: (page 3 of report)

- The dates and locations of the porpoises' recoveries are not consistent with behavior of porpoises in a mass-stranding event. It is unlikely that a startle response would impact the animals beyond an initial reaction and would certainly not result in a week's or longer delayed reaction.

Note: (page 55 of report) "From an epidemiological perspective, the sample size is too small and biased to infer a specific relationship with respect to sonar usage and subsequent strandings."

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- There were actually 16 reported harbor porpoise strandings between May 2 and June 2, 2003. Of these 16 strandings, 15 could not be causally linked by CPF investigators to Shoup's sonar use on May 5, 2003 because of their relative locations, times of discovery, and states of decomposition.
- Six strandings occurred before May 5. Eight strandings occurred one week to three weeks later. Two strandings were discovered on or about May 6, however, one of these was in a moderately decomposed state indicating that the stranding occurred before May 5 and that there was moderate peritonitis that may have been the cause of death.
- There is no evidence indicating the second stranding discovered May 6 resulted from acoustic impact, consistent with the NOAA necropsy report. Additionally, this stranding occurred in a common stranding location and had no fresh food remains in its stomach, which is typical for strandings in the region. It can be concluded, therefore, that this stranding occurred due to normal causes and not as a result of SHOUP's activities on the day prior to its discovery.
- Numerous reports in the media have since repeated the alleged link involving as many as 17 porpoise strandings despite the well-documented history of expected seasonal (i.e., March-June) strandings in Puget Sound from normal mortality and two strandings occurred on the Pacific coast more than 100 miles from Shoup's transit.
- There is no evidence that Resident J-Pod orca were killed, injured, or otherwise harmed as a result of Shoup's May 5, 2003 sonar operations.
- A review of videotape by Navy marine mammal experts showing the orca J-Pod during Shoup's Haro Strait transit indicates the orca behaviors displayed were within the species' normal range of behaviors, and no immediate or general overt negative behaviors were depicted.
- During a 45-minute period between 1:13 p.m. and 1:48 p.m. PDT, the Navy Research Lab determined Shoup's direct path sonar did not reach the J-Pod given Shoup's orientation, location of islands, and the J-Pod location. There were no reported observations of any changes in orca behavior when the direct path sonar ceased being received by the orca at 1:13 p.m. Similarly, there were no reported observations of changes in behavior when the direct path sonar resumed being directly received by the orca at 1:48 p.m.
- Observer opinions regarding orca behaviors when USS Shoup was at the closest point of approach are inconsistent, ranging from claims that the orca were "annoyed" to "kind of resting" to "more or less at ease with the sound" or "resting."

All media queries should be directed to Cmdr. Karen Sellers, Navy Region Northwest Public Affairs Officer, (206) 220-6529.

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